

CONNECTING WITH YOUR MISSIONARIES

MISSIONS: PEOPLE SENDING PEOPLE TO REACH PEOPLE

John 17:18 – “As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.”

Missionaries have answered God’s call to GO:

Matthew 28:19-20 “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you, and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

1. Create Mission Awareness in the Church

Place books in the church library.

Create interest in Missions.

World map – Pinpoint your missionaries.

Have youth group adopt a missionary teen to keep in touch with

Adopt an unreached people group to uphold in prayer

Romans 10:14-15 “How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher? How will they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, “How Beautiful are the feet of those who bring Good News of Good Things!””

Then pray that because of Mission Awareness, someone from your church might answer The call.

Have kids pick a missionary and/or field and then make posters to put around the church.

Have a missionary scrap book of times Missionaries visit your church.

Have a missionary closet or room filled with items Missionaries can use and take with them.

2. Keep Missions before the church

Missionary of the week or month.

Give a quiz and see how many of the missionaries they can name that your church supports.

Do a phone call or Face Time a missionary live during the Sunday Morning Service.

Weekend Missionary Conference

Friday Lunch with Seniors

Friday night Banquet

Saturday morning breakfast and breakout sessions 9:00-12:00
Lunch at restaurant with Missions Committee and Church Staff 12:00-1:30
Dinner in Homes 6:00- 8:30 – 1 missionary per 8-10 people
Sunday morning – Sunday School & Morning Service

Month Long Conference – Every Sunday for 4 weeks.

3. Connect with them through daily prayer

Not just a ritual we go through.

Not just a “bless the missionaries” attitude.

Praying for them from your heart .

“The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much” – James 5:16

4. How to pray for Missionaries

1. Focus on God

Pray for missionaries to stay focused on God and His plans above all else.

But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be provided to you (Matthew 6:33).

2. Faithful Bible Study

Pray for missionaries to spend much time in the Word and ask God to give them discernment.

Be diligent to present yourselves approved to God, a worker who doesn't need to be ashamed, correctly teaching the word of truth (2 Timothy 2:15).

3. Confession and repentance

Pray for missionaries to regularly seek examination by God and to repent from any errors that have crept into their lives.

Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my concerns. See if there is any offensive way in me; lead me in the everlasting way (Psalm 139:23-24).

4. Humility

Pray for missionaries to have a spirit of humility and to willingly ask God for wisdom in carrying out their assignment.

Now if any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously and without criticizing, and it will be given to him (James 1:5).

5. Purity

Pray for missionaries to be so renewed by God's Word that no sin will have dominion over them.

Make my steps steady through Your promise; don't let sin dominate me (Psalm 119:133)

6. Boldness

Pray for boldness in the missionaries when they share the gospel or preach.

Pray also for me, that the message may be given to me when I open my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel (Ephesians 6:19).

7. Rest

Ask God to help missionaries recognize their need for weekly rest away from ministry responsibilities.

He said to them, 'Come away by yourselves to a remote place and rest a while' (Mark 6:31).

8. Guard the treasure

Pray for missionaries to stay focused on the gospel of Jesus Christ and not be distracted by issues of the day.

Hold on to the pattern of sound teaching that you have heard from me in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. Guard, through the Holy Spirit who lives in us, that good thing entrusted to you (2 Timothy 1:13-14).

9. Give glory to God

Ask God to empower missionaries to point people to Jesus and not seek undue recognition for themselves.

In the same way, let your light shine before men, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven (Matthew 5:16).

10. Dependence on God

Pray for missionaries to model a life of dependence on God.

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not rely on your own understanding; think about Him in all your ways, and he will guide you on the right paths (Proverbs 3:5-6).

11. Gracious speech

Ask God to give missionaries the grace to know how to respond to each person.

Your speech should always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you should answer each person (Colossians 4:6).

12. Spirit of unity

Pray for a spirit of unity as missionaries work together and with other ministry partners.

Now may the God of endurance and encouragement grant you agreement with one another according to Christ Jesus (Romans 15:5).

13. Resist temptation

Pray for missionaries to be quick to take the escape God provides when temptation sneaks up on them.

God is faithful and He will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation He will also provide a way of escape, so that you are able to bear it (1 Corinthians 10:13b).

14. Retreat with God

Pray for missionaries to take personal prayer retreats to get their direction from Him.

The Lord God has given Me the tongue of those who are instructed to know how to sustain the weary with a word...He awakens My ear to listen like those being instructed (Isaiah 50:4).

15. Stand firm

Pray for missionaries to stand firm under affliction and to look forward to eternal glory.

For our momentary light affliction is producing for us an absolutely incomparable eternal weight of glory (2 Corinthians 4:17).

16. Daily prayer

Ask God to help missionaries protect their time for prayer and personal study in God's Word.

But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the preaching ministry (Acts 6:4).

17. Devotion to God

Pray for missionaries to maintain their devotion to Christ.

But I fear that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your minds may be corrupted from a complete and pure devotion to Christ (2 Corinthians 11:3).

18. Hear God

Ask God to teach missionaries to hear His voice and follow Him.

The sheep follow him because they recognize his voice (John 10:4).

19. Boast in the Lord

Pray for missionaries to be quick to give God the credit.

So the one who boasts must boast in the Lord (2 Corinthians 10:17).

20. Direction from God

Pray for missionaries to get their direction from the Lord only.

I am the Lord your God, who teaches you for [your] benefit, who leads you in the way you should go (Isaiah 48:17).

21. Peace

Pray for missionaries to give all their anxious thoughts to the God and rest in His peace.

Don't worry about anything, but, in everything through prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses every thought, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus (Philip.4:6-7).

22. Prayer support

Pray for missionaries to enlist personal prayer support and ask God to call faithful intercessors to respond.

So Peter was kept in prison, but prayer was being made earnestly to God for him by the church (Acts 12:5).

23. Strong marriages

Pray for marriages of missionaries to be strong and healthy.

Husbands, in the same way, live with your wives with understanding of their weaker nature yet showing them honor as co-heirs of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered (1 Peter 3:7).

24. Eyes to see like Jesus

Ask God to give missionaries eyes to see as He sees and empower them to love the unlovely, the rejected, and the outcasts as Jesus did.

Man does not see what the Lord sees, for man sees what is visible, but the Lord sees the heart (1 Samuel 16:7b).

25. Express love

Pray for missionaries to model loving God completely and others as themselves.

Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength (Mark 12:30).

26. Hunger for God

Ask God to give missionaries a hunger and thirst for Him and for His word.

But solid food is for the mature- for those whose sense have been trained to distinguish between good and evil (Hebrews 5:14).

27. Persistence

Pray for endurance, stamina, and pacing for missionaries to insure long-term, fruitful ministry. *I pursue as my goal the prize promised by God's heavenly call in Christ Jesus (Philippians 3:14).*

28. Team spirit

Ask God to build strong teams among missionaries working together so that He gets the glory.

So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth... for we are God's co-workers...(1 Corinthians 3:7-9).

29. Obedience

Pray for missionaries to love and obey God, and to be known for their dependability to obey regardless of outside pressure.

If you love Me, you will keep My commandments (John 14:15).

30. Sacrifice of holy living

Ask God to empower missionaries to be healthy in mind, body, and spirit.

...I urge you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God; this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind...(Romans 12:1-2).

5. Keep in touch

Write letters or e-mail them to let them know what is happening and encourage them.

Let them know you do not expect them to reply every time you write.

Send them your church newsletter.

Send them a local newspaper.

Send short video or picture of church activities.

Let children keep in touch with missionaries children.

Be a "link" person to share prayer requests of a particular missionary with the church

Send small presents during the year - Christmas, birthdays, (books, personal items, CDs, DVDs).

6. Here is what Missionaries Shared with me about Communication:

It's a huge encouragement when a church sends us their newsletters and communications.

Feature the Missionary in the Church's Bulletin at least annually with information on their ministry.

Find out personal items they enjoy, hobby's, food's, entertainment, books etc. I think the more personal items are really treasured!

Connect with us regularly. Monthly or quarterly, email us to see how things are going and to get current, specific prayer requests and praises. There might be something new that didn't get in a newsletter.

Shower love and encouragement on my wife and kids.

Cards for birthdays, anniversaries, etc. Maybe even include a gift card that could be used for a meal with the spouse/family.

Best thing a church did for us was have a key contact for us to check in every now and then to pray with us, relay needs to the church, and make sure everyone stayed in the loop with what was happening in our ministry. It's so much easier to share when asked rather than soliciting involvement, and it really helped us feel connected to the church.

A great way to stay connected is having the pastor considering us as one of their congregation even though we are not there while on the missionfield.

7. Here are some other things Missionaries shared with me about bridging the gap:

Keep your missionaries up on the life of the church and including them on mailing lists. Also, assign a person or group to keep in touch with them is a powerful way to bridge the gap. Your missionaries are as interested in you as you are in them and knowing how they can support the church is of vital concern to the missionary.

Relationship-building. We love it when churches include us in their regular activities when home on furlough. Making missionaries feel like they're part of the church's family ... getting invited to special events ... taking us to lunch ... All of these build a bond, a relationship -- and that enhances stronger understanding of each other's needs, concerns, and triumphs and helps to bridge the gap.

Missionaries need to know, in the moment, that they are not alone out there. They need to know that people back home are truly thinking about them at times other than Missions Conferences, and concerned about their ministry and praying for them.

I met a pastor yesterday and what they do is they pray for a missionary monthly, as the deacon is sharing about the missionary and praying in the service, the pastor takes a quick photo and texts it to the missionary.

Another church highlights one missionary each month with a scrolling power point before the service.

What has worked really well for us is one of the churches assigned a person from their church to keep tabs on us periodically. We provide prayer/praise and they have accountability.

Go on a missions trip and spend time with us getting to know our area and what challenges us and our ministry and what it like for us.

8. Practical Support:

Give advice on computers, electronic media, medical matters, schooling options.

Get & send medicines, spare parts, children's materials, office supplies. (Plus \$ get thru customs)

Visit the missionary's elderly parents especially on birthdays or anniversaries.

Attend funerals of his or her relatives.

Financially support the missionary personally – family project.

9. Visit them on the mission field if possible:

See what they do.

Not a vacation.

Help them with their ministry.

Cover all your expenses while there – food, travel, etc.

They may say, "It is not necessary." But it is.

Arrange for a missionary team from your church to go and help them in their ministry.

10. When they come home on furlough:

Greet them at the airport – give them a hero's welcome!

Arrange for the transportation for them from the airport.

Arrange for the provision of housing, furniture, household items and food for them.

Arrange for a vehicle for them while they are home.

Make time for the missionary, especially during the first few weeks – reverse culture shock.

Make technical equipment available for deputation meeting and reporting back to churches.

Take their children on some special outings.

Arrange a weekend away for the couple or the whole family.

Set up an interview with a local newspaper and/or radio or TV station.

Take an older child into your home if they need to stay in the home country for higher education.

11. For Home Missionaries:

Have a group come and do yard work or home repair.

Have a group come and do some small projects.

Assist in what they do as home missionaries.

If starting a church, visit on a Sunday to encourage them

If starting a church, go and help with some projects around the church

12. Retirement:

Help missionaries with readjustment back into the home country at the end of their international service.

Help them find employment if necessary.

Seek accommodations for those retiring.

When they retire don't forget about them. **YOU** have been an important part of **THEIR** life.

Missionaries who have given themselves to a life of the service embrace **Acts 20:24** **"But I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself, so that I may finish my course and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify solemnly of the gospel of the grace of God."**

WHATEVER YOU DO, DO IT HEARTILY AS UNTO THE LORD!

THE KEY ... COMMUNICATION, SUPPORT, COMMUNICATION, PRAYER, COMMUNICATION, ENCOURAGEMENT, COMMUNICATION.